

AD-1: Build New Runways

Runway additions allow improved airport configurations.

Background

The nation's 31 busiest airports, called large hub airports, account for over two thirds of all passenger enplanements. Much of the delay to air traffic can be traced to inadequate throughput (measured as arrival and departure rates) at these airports. The construction of new runways is the most effective method of increasing throughput.

Ops Change Description

A new runway is included in the OEP when the FAA is reasonably certain of the location, dimensions, timing, and planned use of the runway. Eighteen of the thirty-one large hub airports are at various stages of planning a new runway; 13 of these are included in the OEP. Of the thirteen, one runway (Detroit) became operational in December 2001, seven runways are under construction, two are scheduled to begin construction shortly, two have an environmental impact statement in progress, and one has not yet begun the environmental process. These new runways will improve the throughput for the airport and for national airport system overall.

New Runways and Schedules

Airport	Runway	Environmental Status	Construction To Begin ¹	Runway to Open ¹	Capacity Improvement (Percentage) ²
Detroit (DTW)	4L/22R	Complete	1999	<i>Open</i>	25% in VFR; 17% in IFR
Denver (DEN)	16R/34L	Complete	2000	2003	18% in VFR; 4% in IFR
Miami (MIA)	8/26	Complete	2001	2003	10% in VFR; 20% in IFR
Orlando (MCO)	17L/35R	Complete	2000	2003	23% in VFR; 34% in IFR
Houston (IAH)	8L/26R	Complete	2001	2003	35% in VFR; 37% in IFR
Charlotte (CLT)	18W/36W	Complete	2002	2004	18% in VFR; 15% in IFR
Minneapolis (MSP)	17/35	Complete	1999	2004	40% in VFR; 29% in IFR
Atlanta (ATL)	10/28	Complete	2001	2005	31% in VFR; 27% in IFR
Boston (BOS)	14/32	Underway	2003	2005	0% in VFR; 0% in IFR
Cincinnati (CVG)	17/35	Underway	2003	2005	26% in VFR; 26% in IFR
Seattle (SEA)	16W/34W	Complete	1998	2006	52% in VFR; 46% in IFR
St. Louis (STL)	12R/30L	Complete	2001	2006	14% in VFR; 84% in IFR
Washington (IAD)	1/19West	Not underway	2005	2007	46% in VFR; 54% in IFR

Scope and Applicability

- A new runway at Boston Logan will reduce delay in certain runway configurations but is not expected to increase the optimum capacity of the airport.

¹ The dates are supplied by the airport sponsor and are contingent on the issuance of a favorable environmental record of decision by the FAA.

² The source of the capacity improvement percentage is the Airport Capacity Benchmark Report 2001 (Table 2).

- Five additional large hub airports (LAX, DFW, SFO, BWI, and TPA) are in various stages of planning a new runway or reconfiguring runways, however, the location, dimensions, timing, and planned use of the runway are not certain and are therefore not included in the OEP.
- Runway extensions (i.e., lengthening an existing runway) are not explicitly identified here, but can improve capacity by allowing use by larger aircraft or by eliminating runway intersections.

Key Risks

- Environmental analysis must be completed before a new runway can be built. Runways with big benefits typically have big environmental impacts. Every effort is being made to streamline the environmental review process but it is a long and complicated process.
- Experience has shown that projected opening dates frequently change due to unforeseen circumstances at the local level. FAA (ARP) will monitor schedules and provide updated information on a quarterly basis.
- To realize the benefit of a new runway, the FAA must develop procedures, deploy navigational equipment, and ensure adequate staffing. The OEP provides the coordination mechanism to ensure that these measures are in place when the runway is scheduled to open.
- Pilots may require training/familiarization with new terminal and surface routes and procedures.